

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 9868

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, AU

SUBJ: MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE

REF: A. VIENNA 9040

B. VIENNA 9479

SUMMARY: AUSTRIAN PRESS HAS WARNED GOA THAT MINORITY ISSUE NOW HAS SHORT FUSE AND THAT FURTHER SHUFFLING OF PROTEST NOTES WILL ONLY RESULT IN INTERNATIONALIZATION OF ISSUE BY YUGOSLAVS. SITUATION REMAINS TENSE IN CARINTHIA WHILE MFA IS IN FINAL STAGE OF PREPARING GOA RESPONSE TO EARLIER YUGOSLAV PROTEST NOTE ON SUBJECT. YUGOSLAV EMBASSY HERE CONTINUES TO KEEP UP PRESSURE ON AUSTRIANS FOR ACTION, NOT WORDS, ON ISSUE. AUSTRIAN OFFICIALS REMAIN CONVINCED THAT YUGOSLAVIA'S TOUGH TALKING ON ISSUE IS REALLY AN EFFORT TO DISTRACT YUGOSLAV POPULATION FROM MAJOR POLITICAL-NATIONALITIES' STRUGGLE WITHIN YUGOSLAVIA. CHANCELLOR KREISKY'S HANDLING OF ISSUE SUGGESTS HE CONTINUES TO FEEL THAT DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS OUTWEIGH FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES AND THEREFORE SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE CAN ONLY BE MANAGED, NOT RESOLVED, AT THIS JUNCTURE. END SUMMARY

1. TWO OF VIENNA'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS PAPERS ("DIE PRESSE"

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AND "DIE FURCHE") CARRIED FRONT-PAGE ARTICLES NOV. 21

WARNING THAT GOA HAS JUST ABOUT RUN OUT OF TIME IN ITS HANDLING OF SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE AND THAT IF GOA DOES NOT COME UP WITH SOME REASONABLE PROPOSALS TO ACCOMMODATE SLOVENE MINORITY VERY SOON, YUGOSLAVIA WILL MOVE TO FORMALLY INTERNATIONALIZE ISSUE BY BRINGING IT BEFORE CURRENT UNGA OR CALLING CONFERENCE OF SIGNATORY POWERS OF 1955 STATE TREATY. ARTICLES APPEARED UNDER HEADLINES "LAST STAGE BEFORE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF SLOVENE ISSUE ALREADY REACHED" AND "SLOVEN ISSUE BEFORE UN: IS SUCH A SCANDAL NECESSARY?", RESPECTIVELY. THRUST OF ARTICLES IS THAT YUGOSLAVIA HAS ALREADY MOVED ISSUE INFORMALLY INTO INTERNATIONAL FORA BY RAISING SUBJECT IN RECENT UNESCO MEETING (WHERE ALLEGED SIMILARITY WAS CITED BETWEEN AUSTRIA'S RECORD ON ISSUE AND THAT OF RHODESIA) AND BY REPORTEDLY MOUNTING ANTI-AUSTRIAN INFORMATION CAMPAIGN IN SEVERAL WESTERN EUROPEAN CAPITALS. ARTICLES ALSO SUGGEST THAT WHEREAS GOA MAY FEEL IT CAN DEFEND ITS POSITION WITH CONVINCING ARGUMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, FACT IS THAT INDEPENDENT FOREIGN OBSERVERS MAY HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY IN ACCEPTING AUSTRIAN ARGUMENTS AT FACE VALUE.

2. IN OTHER RELATED DEVELOPMENTS, YUGOSLAV EMBASSY IN VIENNA PROTESTED ORALLY TO FONOFF NOV. 20 REGARDING ARTICLE IN ONE OF VIENNA'S MORE SENSATIONALIST PAPERS ("KRONEN ZEITUNG") WHICH CITED FONOFF AS SOURCE OF REPORT THAT YUGOSLAVIA WAS CONDUCTING "SLANDER CAMPAIGN" AGAINST AUSTRIA IN WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES ON MINORITY ISSUE. FONOFF HAS DENIED BEING SOURCE OF REPORT AND WE UNDERSTAND FONMIN, IN EFFORT TO ASSUAGE TEMPER, WROTE "PERSONAL LETTER OF APOLOGY" TO YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR ON SUBJECT. IN SIMILAR EFFORT TO REDUCE DECIBAL OF VERBAL CONFLICT, FONMIN AT DINNER ON EVENING SAME DAY GIVEN IN HIS HONOR BY YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR UNDERLINED AUSTRIA'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA AND TO RESOLVE EXISTING PROBLEMS.

3. IN CONTRAST, SITUATION IN CARINTHIA RE SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE CONTINUES TO BE FAIRLY TENSE. PERPERTRATORS OF RECENT BOMB ATTACK ON KLAGENFURT HEADQUARTERS OF

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HEIMATDIENST, MILITANT NATIONALIST ORGANIZATION OPPOSING ANY ACCOMMODATION WITH SLOVENE MINORITY, HAVE NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED. LEADERS OF SLOVENE MINORITY AND OF HEIMATDIENST REMAIN CONVINCED THAT OTHER SIDE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BOMBING ATTACK. PROVINCIAL SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO KEEP SITUATION UNDER CONTROL WHILE REITERATING LINE THAT SOCIALIST FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS APPROPRIATE LEVEL FOR RESOLVING ISSUE. UPCOMING PROVINCIAL

ELECTIONS IN MARCH OF 1975, IN WHICH NO-SOCIALIST
OPPOSITION PARTIES HOPE TO CUT HEAVILY INTO SOCIALIST
VOTER SUPPORT BY GIVING ELECTION CAMPAIGN NATIONALIST
TWIST, SEEM TO PRECLUDE ANY VIABLE INITIATIVES BEING
TAKEN BY CARINTHIAN GOVERNMENT ON ISSUE.

4. AUSTRIAN RESPONSE TO OCT. 29 GOY NOTE NOW EXPECTED
TO BE READY FOR DELIVERY IN LAST DAYS OF NOVEMBER
AND WILL FOLLOW GENERAL LINES SUGGESTED IN REFTEL B.
AUSTRIAN OFFICIAL SOURCES CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT
YUGOSLAVIA'S CURRENT OUTSPOKEN DEFENSE OF SLOVENE AND
CROATIAN MINORITY RIGHTS IN AUSTRIA IS REALLY FALL-OUT
OF MAJOR INTERNAL YUGOSLAV POLITICAL-NATIONALITIES'
STRUGGLE AND THAT THEREFORE, BY IMPLICATION, YUGOSLAV
PROTESTS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE. YUGOSLAV
EMBASSY SOURCES HERE, IN EFFORT TO KEEP UP PRESSURE ON GOA,
ARE ALREADY DISCOUNTING ON VIENNA DIPLOMATIC CIRCUIT
POSSIBLE USEFULNESS OF PENDING AUSTRIAN NOTE TOWARD
MOVING ISSUE ANY CLOSER TO RESOLUTION.

5. SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE CAME UP IN AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENTARY
COMMITTEE MEETING NOV. 20 AT WHICH CHANCELLOR KREISKY,
IN RESPONSE TO QUERY FROM OPPOSITION PARTIES FOR PRECISE
INFORMATION OF CONTEMPLATED "SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS"
IN CARINTHIA, REITERATED HIS EARLIER OBSERVATION THAT
"SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS" SHOULD BE SUBSUMED UNDER GENERAL
CENSUS. HE REFUSED, HOWEVER, TO BE DRAWN OUT AS TO
POSSIBLE DATE FOR HEAD COUNT OR MECHANICS OF SUCH
UNDERTAKING. KREISKY, WHO REMAINS FINAL AUTHORITY ON
ALL ASPECTS OF AUSTRIAN HANDLING OF ISSUE, CONTINUES
HIS EFFORT TO MANAGE ISSUE IN ATTEMPT TO AVOID ANY
DOMESTIC POSITICAL FALLOUT WHICH MIGHT DAMAGE
SOCIALIST PARTY PROSPECTS IN 1975 NATIONAL ELECTIONS.
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